

POLICY ON FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

To understand the state of the art of TEFL at elementary and junior secondary schools, a survey was administered to two groups of EFL teacher respondents, namely 88 elementary teachers in Jakarta and 200 junior secondary teachers who live in Jakarta and West Java, and Banten provinces. They teach at either private schools (50.8%) or public schools (49.2%), and 89.0 % of them have worked for more than five years. They are either public (47.4%) or private teachers (52.6%), and most of them are female teachers (69.8%). The junior secondary teachers were participants of the nine-day Teacher Certification Program in September 2011, a mandatory professional development scheme to qualify them as a professional teacher. The primary school teachers are graduates of or are attending PGSD, i.e., four year elementary school teacher education. The survey findings are not generalizable to the whole country, but they present a relatively comprehensive picture of EFL teaching in the basic education units, i.e., elementary and secondary schools.

Keywords: Teaching English as Foreign Language (TEFL), Teacher Certification Program, professional development, teacher education

Introduction

In Indonesia the status of English as a foreign language was declared formally in 1955 in a teacher trainer conference (Lauder, 2008). The status remains the same until now that English is the first foreign language taught at school (Komaria, 1998 in Lauder 2008). Law 1989 Chapter IX Section 39 mentions English as a compulsory subject to be taught from Grade 7 at lower secondary level. Government Regulation No. 060/U/1993 dated 25 February 1993 mentions that on primary level English might be taught as a local content subject starting from Grade 4. In addition, the 1989 Law on Education, Chapter XI, Section 42, and Paragraph 2 also allows for the possibility of using English as a medium of instruction, with the proviso that this is needed for developing knowledge of a particular subject or vocational skill.

The national curriculum has experienced eight time changes. They are the 1945, 1952, 1964, 1968, 1975, 1984, 1994, 2004, and 2006 curriculum (ekagurunesama, 2012). The latest one is called KTSP (School Based

Curriculum). KTSP should be developed by individual schools based on Standard Competence and Basic Competence set by the National Ministry of Education and Culture (See Ministerial Regulation No 23 Year 2006). English is formally an optional school subject in primary schools and a compulsory subject starting from junior secondary schools.

To talk about EFL teaching in Indonesia is to address the issue of language planning in a multilingual setting, where 742 local languages exist (Etnologue, 2005). Most children acquire their mother tongue in childhood, and then learn Indonesian as the second language in schools. Gradually in big cities Grade 3 students now learn three languages: local language, Indonesian, and English. In such a situation, we cannot expect Grade 9 students to have English proficiency similar to that of their counterparts, say, in Singapore and the Philippines, where English is a second language. A theory says that the linguistic system of the previously acquired languages will confuse learners in acquiring a new language. Their proficiency will “freeze”

or become stuck at some more or less deviant stage (Mitchel and Myles: 2004). In general English is only taught 70 minutes per week in primary school, 160 minutes in Junior Secondary school. In this regard, Lightbown, (2000) has suggested that, in instructional settings, the age at which instruction begins is less important than the intensity of the instruction and the continuation of the exposure over a sufficient period of time. As pointed out later in this report, many variables would explain the incomplete success of students in learning English.

Since independence in 1945 English rather than Dutch has been a school subject in Secondary School (beginning Grade 7). It is a compulsory foreign language taught in all types of schools. Formal national guidelines are provided at the national level, but the curriculum is expected to be developed at school level. Since the 1990's many elementary schools started introducing English to higher Grade (4-6). Positive responses from the society are very high and many schools now introduce it even to Grade 1, without necessarily having qualified teachers. National guidelines are available for teaching Grade 4-6 and if schools decide to start teaching it from Grade 1, they have to develop their own curriculum, which is a challenging task. Since 1990's Indonesian government has allowed schools to teach English from primary schools, which means that students have longer time to learn English. However, this is not equivalent with improvement of proficiency. Dardjowidjojo (1998) once observed that, despite the number of years allocated, the result has not been encouraging. The majority of Indonesians, including many highly educated language scholars, do not master English well enough to absorb scientific materials written in English. Their oral ability is worse.

English is now optional in primary schools and compulsory in junior and secondary schools over 60 thousands schools and with over 18 million student's altogether.

Nationally there are 2,783,321 teachers including 122,588 (4.4%) English teachers. There is on the average only two teachers of English in one school, suggesting one teacher has to handle on the average 150 students (Hamied, 2011). With the law requiring teachers to have at least a four-year degree and to have a teaching certificate, the government is now in the process of mass-certifying teachers. The certification is mandated to few and selected LPTK, namely colleges or universities of education. At present there are 128 ELT training throughout the country (Hamied, 2011).

Our survey (2011) indicated that for 73.9% of the respondents, English at Elementary school is a mandatory subject. It is taught from Grade 1 to Grade 6 (92.0%) with the policy coming from *Dinas Pendidikan* (Regional Office of Education) according to 21.3% of the respondents, while the rest reported it as the school policy. It suggests that EFL teaching at elementary schools is a bottom-up policy, namely a policy initiated by the school. In fact many elementary schools were just jumping into the bandwagon. While most of the elementary teacher respondents (58.0%) have neither English background nor English for young learner training, the qualifications of secondary EFL teachers are better as they have the following qualifications: Master's degree (4.2%), BA degree (90.7%), and Diploma 3 (5.1%). As Hamied (2011) observes, only 35% of English teachers are academically qualified to teaching.

Situational Analysis

Policy and Strategy on Foreign Language Education in Basic Education

The current practice of education is regulated by the 2003 National Education Law and more elaborated by the Ministerial Regulation No 22 Year 2006 on the content standards of elementary and secondary education. According to the Government Regulation No. 19 Year 2005, *Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan* (BSNP) or the Board of

National Standard of Education is tasked with developing the content of the national standard of education, which includes the following:

1. The blue print and structure of the curriculum as a guideline for developing a curriculum in units of education.
2. The learning load of students in a unit of elementary and secondary education.
3. The curriculum at levels of education to be more developed by each unit of education based on the guidelines.
4. The calendar of education in each unit and level of elementary and secondary education.

The curriculum of general education, vocational education, and special education on elementary and secondary levels consist of five clusters, namely:

- a. Religion and noble character
The subjects are aimed at developing students who believe in God and have a noble character, which includes ethics and morality as manifestation of religious education.
- b. Citizenship and personality
The subjects are aimed at developing citizens' awareness of rights and obligations as members of community and nation and of improving their quality as human beings.
- c. Science and technology
At elementary levels, the subjects are aimed at enabling students to understand, appreciate science and technology and developing critical, creative, and independent thinking. At junior secondary levels, the subjects are aimed at developing student competencies in science and ethnology and to enable them to think critically, creatively and independently.
- d. Esthetics
The subjects are aimed at developing student sensitivity and appreciation towards beauty and harmony.
- e. Physical education and health
The subjects are aimed at improving

student physical potentials and developing sportsmanship and awareness toward health.

The curriculum according to the regulation is developed by the school and the school committee with reference to the guidelines published by BSNP. The curriculum is to be based on the following principles.

- a. It should be based on the potential, development, needs, and interest of the students and their environment.
- b. It should be based diversity and cohesion.
- c. It should be sensitive toward development of science, technology, and arts.
- d. It should be relevant with contemporary life.
- e. It should be comprehensive and sustainable.
- f. It should be based on life-long education.
- g. It should be developed with the balance between national and regional interest.

The implementation of the curriculum in each unit of education should be based on the following principles.

- a. Students should get a quality education, and get an opportunity to express themselves freely and in a dynamic and fun way.
- b. The curriculum is implemented on the basis of the five pillars of learning, namely to learn: (1) to have faith in God, (2) to know and to appreciate, (3) to do something effectively, (4) to live together and to be useful for others, and (5) to develop own the character through effective, creative, effective, and fun learning.
- c. The curriculum enables students to get services of improvement, enrichment, and acceleration relevant with their potential.
- d. The curriculum is implemented on the basis of teacher-students relations with mutual respect, intimacy, openness, and warmth.
- e. The curriculum is implemented using a multi-strategy and multimedia approach,

Table 1 Elementary Curriculum

Component	Grades and allocated times			
	I	II	III	IV, V and VI
A. Subject				
1. Religion				3
2. Civics Education				2
3. Indonesian Language				5
4. Math				5
5. Science				4
6. Social Studies				3
7. Arts and Skills				4
8. Physical Education				4
B. Local Content				2
C. Self Development				2
Total	26	27	28	32

as well as the use of the environment as a source of learning.

- f. The curriculum is implemented by utilizing the local nature and culture to support education.
- g. Within the curriculum all school subjects, local content, and self actualization are implemented on the basis of equilibrium, interconnectedness, and sustainability.

The following table illustrates the curriculum of elementary schools in Indonesia. The elementary curriculum consists of eight mandatory subjects, local content, and self development.

In the table above English is not listed because it is an optional subject, called a local content subject. Depending on geographical conditions, some cities or districts might not see English as an important subject at primary school level. The local content consists of activities to develop competencies relevant with the specific identities or potentials of the regions, including strengths of the regions that are otherwise included in the eight subjects. It is up to the school authority to decide the substance of the local content. However, most elementary schools have chosen EFL as the local content subject. The policy is either made by a district or city education office or by the school level. Due to positive response from the society, English courses

are mushrooming even at sub-district levels. Despite the government-recommended GBA, this approach is not recommended for primary schools. Instead, for teaching Grade 1-3, the curriculum is based on theme, topic, function, and situation or CTL (contextual learning); while for teaching Grade 4-6, the curriculum is a communicative one.

Self development is not a school subject to be directly taught by teachers. Instead, they are designed to provide students with opportunities to develop and express themselves, in line with their needs, talent, interest and school conditions. The programs are supervised by counselors, teachers, or educational personnel as extracurricular activities such as sports, first aids treatments, scouting, etc. All of these, along with the school subjects, are reported in the student report book.

All subjects are allocated time as listed in the table, where one hour session is 35 minutes in primary school and 40 minutes in junior secondary school. In general in a year, which consists of two semesters and begins in July and ends in June, there are 34-38 effective weeks. However, each school may add four extra hours per week. In the present system, a certified teacher has to teach 24 hours per week.

As elementary EFL teacher respondents perceived, most of the policies are concerned with curriculum (23.2%), learning materials (21.9%), and methods of teaching (20%). They believed that the most important policy expected from the government is on learning materials. Regarding the textbook, they use the ones recommended by the government (46.4%), ones chosen by the school, foundation or teachers (38.2%), and ones developed by themselves (15.5%). This suggests the following.

- For elementary EFL teachers choosing and developing learning materials are not an easy task, and therefore they need more practical knowledge rather than theoretical knowledge as envisioned by the curriculum. Consequently, most elementary EFL teachers faithfully follow the textbook or student work sheets. Their teaching is simply bookish.
- Despite the availability of government-recommended textbooks, some teachers develop the materials themselves, either because the government-recommended books are difficult to get or because they are not relevant with the school and students. The government has launched BSE (*Buku Sekolah Elektronik*), which is e-book for high secondary schools.

Most elementary teachers still have difficulty in the following areas: instructional technology (29.5%), curriculum implementation (24.2%), methods of teaching (21.1%), and teaching materials (21.1%). This suggests that instructional technology is considered the weakest area to improve, and it should be included in the EFL pre service and in-service trainings.

The EFL elementary teachers have the following qualifications: having English education background (18.8%), having EFL training (9.1%), and neither (53.0%). They are either permanent teachers (80.2%) or part-time teachers (19.8%), who are class teachers (51.4%) while the rest are EFL teachers. They are either public teachers (70.1%) or non-

public teachers (29.9%) who have worked for more than 5 years (76.7%). This suggests the following.

- The majority of EFL elementary teachers are not qualified to teach EFL. As stated earlier most elementary schools are just jumping into the bandwagon without necessarily having qualified teachers.
- The issuance of content standard of EFL at elementary schools by the government has been interpreted that English is a mandatory subject. In fact it is a local content that could be used for teaching a local or minor language.
- Compared with their secondary EFL teacher counterparts, elementary teachers hardly get opportunity to join professional development programs (Sundayana 2012, personal communication).

The junior secondary curriculum consists of 10 mandatory subjects including English, local content, and self development. All the subjects are allocated time as listed in the table, where one hour session is 40 minutes. In general in a year of two semesters, there are 34-38 effective weeks. However, each school may add four extra hours per week.

As can be seen from the table above, English is listed as a mandatory school subject. It is a government policy, while at primary levels it is a school policy, namely an optional subject for local content area.

Laws, Plans, Policy, Strategy, and Regulation

The secondary teachers stated that most policies on English education are basically the product of the following: (1) Center for Curriculum and Textbook Evaluation (41.7%), (2) Quality Assurance Body (22.5%), (3) Center for Educational Personnel Development (16.3%), and (4) P4TK or *Pusat Pengembangan Profesi Pendidik dan Tenaga Kependidikan* namely Center for Teacher Professional Development (8.3%). This suggests Center for Curriculum and Textbook Evaluation and Quality Assurance Body are the units that have issued regulations

Table 2 Junior Secondary Curriculum

Component	Grades and allocated times		
	VII	VIII	IX
A. Subject	2	2	2
1. Religion	2	2	2
2. Civics Education	4	4	4
3. Indonesian Language	4	4	4
4. English	4	4	4
5. Math	4	4	4
6. Science	4	4	4
7. Social Studies	4	4	4
8. Art and Culture	4	4	4
9. Physical Education	2	2	2
10. Vocational Skill and IT	2	2	2
B. Local Content	2	2	2
C. Self Development	2	2	2
Total	32	32	32

considerably affecting the professionalism of teachers. The functions of the four units are elaborated as follows.

- Center for Curriculum and Textbook Evaluation (PUSKUR)

This center has many functions among others are as follows.

1. To develop policies on development of curriculum, learning methods, textbooks, and other learning resources.
2. To develop guidelines of developing curriculum, learning methods, textbooks, and other learning resources.
3. To develop models of curriculum, learning methods, textbooks, and other learning resources.
4. To develop textbooks, teachers' guides, references, etc.
5. To review and translate books.
6. To improve competencies of textbook writers.
7. To develop guidelines of evaluating textbooks.

8. To monitor and evaluate the implementation of curriculum, learning methods, textbooks, and other learning resources.

- Quality Assurance Body (LPMP)
As stipulated in Ministerial regulation No 07, year 2007, and this body has the major following functions.

1. To outline the quality of basic education including kindergarten and other educational units on similar levels.
2. To develop and manage information system of quality of basic education including kindergarten and other educational units on similar levels.
3. To supervise basic education unit including kindergarten and other educational units on similar levels to ensure the fulfillment of the national standards.
4. To provide educational resources for basic education including kindergarten and other educational units on similar levels.

- Center for Educational Research (PUSPENDIK)

This center has the following functions.

1. To develop policies on developing methods of educational assessment.
2. To develop and carry out a system of academic assessment.
3. To develop and carry out a system of non-academic assessment and selection.
4. To develop a system and management of educational basement information.
5. To analyze results educational assessment.
6. To coordinate and facilitate the implementation of educational assessment.
7. To evaluate the implementation of educational assessment.
8. To report the implementation of educational assessment.

- Center for Teacher and Education Personnel Professional Development (P4TK)

This center has the following functions.

1. To develop programs for developing and empowering teachers and educational personnel.
2. To manage data and information regarding competencies of teachers and educational personnel.
3. To facilitate and implement the improvement of competencies of teachers and educational personnel.
4. To evaluate programs and facilitate the improvement of competencies of teachers and educational personnel.

Regarding the existing policies, the secondary EFL teachers stated that they are most directly concerned with the following issues: (1) curriculum (26.6%), (2) learning materials (23.6%), (3) methods of teaching (20.3%), (4) learning evaluation (12.4%), and (5) regional autonomy on education (11.8%). They also believed that guidelines regarding the following aspects are not clear: methods

of teaching (15.8%), learning evaluation (15.5%), and learning materials (13.8%). These suggest the following.

- The secondary EFL teachers are most concerned with the existing curriculum, which is genre-based approach. Next to the curriculum is learning materials, methods of teaching, and learning evaluation.
- They are simply overwhelmed with the curriculum and they prefer to use the previous curriculum, the competence-based curriculum. However, as Emilia, et al (2010) point out that after intensive trainings on GBA and KTSP (school-based curriculum), the teacher respondents in West Java demonstrated a good understanding of the approach and the curriculum.

Foreign Language Education Curriculum in Basic Education

Teaching Approaches and Methods

The history of EFL teaching in Indonesia seems to follow the same universal pattern of evolution, namely the use grammar translation method, direct method, communicative language teaching, and Genre Based Approach. As it is always the case, new approaches or methods of teaching are always reacted with pros and cons. The secondary EFL teachers reported they used following approaches or methods of teaching: contextual teaching and learning or CTL (10.5%), PAIKEM, namely Active, Innovative, Creative, Effective, and Fun (8.6%), genre-based approach or GBA (2.9%), and communicative approach (1.9%).

The data above show that the secondary EFL teachers claimed that they are—to various degrees--practitioners of CTL, PAIKEM, GBA, and communicative approach. These are the approaches mostly mentioned by them. CTL seems to be the most popular approach, followed by PAIKEM, and GBA. Regarding KTSP (school-based curriculum) teachers recommended that it: (1) it should be reviewed (39.5%), (2) there is no enough guideline to implement it (37.3%), and (3)

teachers are not ready to implement KTSP (19.2%). These suggest the following.

- Communicative approach as a terminology seems to have lost its prestige. Teachers are now forgetting it and using more recent approaches, such as CTL, PAIKEM, and GBA. The ministry seems to have succeeded in socializing the government-initiated approaches namely PAIKEM and GBA for implementing KTSP.
- Teachers are more comfortable with CTL approach. It allows them to be flexible in managing the class, depending on the context of teaching and learning.
- PAIKEM is also familiar to the teachers, as it challenges them to create active, innovative, creative, effective, and fun learning. Each of these five modes of learning, however, carries with itself relative difficulty in implementation. PAIKEM is a generic approach that can be used for teaching any school subject.
- Genre-based approach (GBA) is relatively a new thing for teachers. Many teachers are still confused with it. No wonder it is the least understood approach. This approach is familiar to junior secondary EFL teachers, but it is less known by senior secondary teachers and vocational school teachers.
- KTSP or school-based curriculum is the most demanding for teachers. On one hand, it empowers teachers to develop their own approaches and methods of teaching as long as the standard objectives are achieved. On the other hand, it requires teachers to be creative and resourceful in developing their own instructional objectives. This also requires teachers to be creative in managing the class. Therefore many teachers recommended it be reviewed or a guideline be made available for them.

Learning Materials (Textbooks, Online courses, VDO, TV, IT, and etc.)

The secondary teachers reported using the textbooks that are: (1) recommended by the government (44.3%), (2) recommended by

the foundation or school and teachers (26.1%), and (3) developed by teachers (25.7%). This suggests the following.

- The majority of English textbooks used by secondary schools are those developed by the Center for Curriculum and Textbook Evaluation. Thus the center has fulfilled its function to control the quality of the books.
- The organization and the management have authority to choose the books for the schools. The quality of the books is not necessarily better than that of the government-recommended textbooks. The situation indicates that teachers are demanded to adapt the materials provided in the textbook and even develop extra material if they expect the students to be able to use English fluently. The consequence is English teachers should perform a certain level of fluency that enables them to conduct classroom activities that encourage students fluency.
- Wallace (1993) has raised a fundamental and critical aspect of training teachers in EFL context. There are not many teacher training books written specifically for EFL context where two main issues, language and professional knowledge and skills should be strongly highlighted. Teachers in EFL context should achieve a certain level of English proficiency that enables them to at least deal with social language and classroom language.
- Some teachers for various reasons develop the textbooks for their own teaching purposes. Due to lack of quality control, the teacher-produced textbooks may have negatively affected the quality of students' learning. Textbook writing requires an expertise, and the majority of teachers do not have any training on textbook writing during their pre-service training.
- Access to effective instructional materials that encourage fluency is limited in Indonesia. Most textbooks focus on

language works. These textbooks put bigger emphasis on discussing text and rules of language. Palmer and Chodidjah observed, "There was, however, quite a range of teacher language proficiency and classroom practice. Additionally in some rural schools, only the teacher had access to a textbook, with the learners using booklets for reading and grammar exercises. Rote learning is the norm with very little emphasis on fluency, listening, or speaking skills. While some of these schools did have access to media resources, there is a wide gap in knowledge of how to effectively use these in the classroom." (2012: 37)

Assessment/Evaluation

Within the current curriculum, schools have the authority to develop their own assessment system and therefore they have developed rules and regulations. In a semester a teacher should at least have five collections of score, three of student's daily assessment, one from formative test and one summative test. The tests are usually developed by Junior Secondary English teachers in the MGMP (Subject matter teacher association) meetings. MGMP is a subject teacher's organization on province level to sub district level. They often produce formative and summative test through this meetings. Test development is a time-consuming activity and perceived as the least mastered aspect by secondary teachers. On the primary school level, teachers usually produce tests in their teacher's regular meeting. Primary schools have no subject matter teacher association. In general, assessment is still done in pencil paper testing format.

At the final year of lower secondary, students sit for a national examination. English is one of the three subject matters taught in lower and upper secondary. This often becomes the biggest challenge for teachers because they have to put extra efforts for students to pass the national exam. Failure in achieving the minimum standard score causes

failure for the students to pass the school level exam. National exam problems are 50 items multiple choice test. No room for national oral examination.

Activities, Special Courses, After-school courses, tutoring, etc.

After school English courses are very popular in Indonesia. They usually provide English tutoring for different levels of students. Depending on their service, the tuition fee for the courses is different from one language centre to another. There are at least two types of tutoring system. First, a course that practically improves quality of English proficiency. This type of language centers usually have their own syllabus which focus more on making their course participants able to communicate in English. Second, the type of the course that focuses on supporting students in passing the school or national exam. Students are exposed to different types of the national exam to get the students familiar with the test types. The number of students who can afford to take this kind of extra English tuition is limited. To develop English proficiency the majority of students rely on the school lesson.

Teachers

At present there are around 2.7 million teachers in the country, making it the largest corps of civil servants in Indonesia. To become an English teacher in junior and senior secondary, one should have an undergraduate diploma from teaching and education faculty by law. Those who intend to become a civil servant under the central or local government system should undergo an entry test. If they pass the recruitment test they are placed in different regions in Indonesia. Many teachers who are either not interested in joining civil servant or are not eligible for it apply to private schools in their regions. Starting in 2009 National Ministry of Education and Culture, under regulation Number 10 Year 2009 about certification for the practicing

teachers, requires all practicing teachers to hold teaching certificate from the government. The main reason is because in the previous law teachers did not necessarily hold a BA degree.

Around 1,000,000 teachers of 2.7 million have taken or are currently taking a PLPG program, namely a mandatory professional improvement programs as mandated by the laws. Selected teachers-training universities are mandated to carry out the PLPG program. Annually around 300,000 teachers are certified, and it would take another four years to certify all teachers in the country. The PLPG program consists of 90 hour training on the following subjects: (1) teacher professional development, (2) review of subject matter, (3) teaching methodology, (4) workshops on action research, classroom action research, academic writing, learning material development, and (5) peer teaching.

Mastery

Regarding their qualifications, the secondary teachers reported they have mastered the following as part of their professionalism: (1) learning materials (51.3%), (2) methods of teaching (16.7%), (3) curriculum implementation (11.9%), (4) instructional technology (10%), and (5) learning evaluation (9.7%). This suggests the following.

- For the secondary teachers mastering learning materials, namely English knowledge, seems to be easier than mastering methods of teaching, implementing the curriculum, using instructional technology, and conducting learning evaluation.
- To develop professionalism in EFL teaching, proficiency in English is essential, but mastering the subject matter pedagogy is also essential. In other words, it is much easier to learn English than to learn how to teach it.
- However, recent observations of the PLPG teacher participants at UPI, Bandung confirmed that both junior and senior

secondary EFL teacher's mastery of materials as elaborated in the standard of content is still weak, and therefore many teachers failed in the final tests. Their average TOEFL scores are 400, which is below the intermediate level (Sundayana 2012, personal communication). Sundayana's observation is consistent with Hamied's finding (2011) that the level of proficiency of teachers of English as measured by TOEIC in 2007 and 2008, is only 518, with those in Java scoring on the average 563, still at the intermediate level.

The secondary EFL teachers also reported the following aspects as the least mastered by them: (1) instructional technology (33.9%), (2) curriculum implementation (28.2%), (3) methods of teaching (20.8%), (4) EFL teaching materials (8.7%), and (5) learning evaluation (8.4%). This suggests the following.

- Instructional technology is the weakest component of EFL teaching followed by curriculum implementation and methods of teaching. However the weaknesses do not necessarily lead to failure, as good teachers may teach well without using sophisticated technology.
- Improving teachers' mastery of instructional technology will necessarily improve their teaching performance.

How to improve professionalism

On how to improve professionalism in ELT, they believe that it could be done through the following: (1) in-service training (38.1%), (2) improving proficiency in English (37.1%), and (3) obtaining S-2 degree (16.2%). This suggests the following.

- Secondary EFL teachers believe that in-service training is the most appropriate way of upgrading their professionalism, followed by improving English proficiency.
- In-service trainings are still a routine program for teachers hosted by Center

for Teacher Professional Development (P4TK), Quality Assurance Body, and Center for Educational Personnel Development (*Pusat Pengembangan Profesi Pendidik*).

- Secondary EFL teachers are less interested in obtaining a graduate degree than obtaining a teaching certificate as mandated by the law.

Certification program

- The secondary teachers are—when the survey was administered—attending a 9 day certification program. In their perception the certification program has (1) improved teachers' welfare (34.4%), (2) not improved quality of learning (27.8%), (3) improved teachers' professionalism (23.4%), and (4) improved quality of learning (13.2%). This suggests the following. They believed that the certification program has improved their welfare but failed to improve the quality of teaching, which is the bedrock of professionalism
- The current certification system should be redesigned by involving the local universities, the regional office of education, and the professional associations.

Teacher Recruitment, Teacher Training, Training Organizations

Teacher recruitment is done by the provincial government in coordination with the central government, while teacher in-service training is the responsibility of P4TK, namely the Center for Teacher Professional Development, the regional Body for Quality Assurance, and regional offices of education. Regarding the association of teachers (MGMP), they perceive that it: (1) has improved their professionalism (32.7%), (2) is more as social organization than professional (31.8%), (3) does not work for professional rights (20.2%), and (4) is less independent (12.6%). This suggests the following.

- Subject-based teachers association is

perceived as positive by the teachers as it holds regular professional meetings for improving their professionalism.

- The association is not a political organization, but it is more concerned with professional development.

Native/ Foreign English Teachers, Local English Teachers, etc.

Public schools do not hire native or foreign English teachers. A few private schools do. Generally speaking, private English courses in big cities hire native speakers as consultants or instructors. Native speakers are perceived as insignificant for innovation as it was only 12.8% of the respondents who believe they could create innovation or improvement. This suggests the following.

- Contrary to the common belief of many people, native speakers of English are not as important as instructional technology. In other words, it is more constructive to invest money on instructional technology rather than on hiring native speakers.
- The secondary teachers are confident enough to teach English as a foreign language. The provision of native speaker in schools is not a standard of learning service.

School Management

Elementary schools and junior secondary schools are led by a headmaster, usually assisted by assistants for curriculum affairs and student affairs. Depending on the size, a school may appoint more assistants. The schools usually have the following to provide standard service for students: library, first aids unit, guidance and counseling unit, and praying room, language laboratories, canteen, learning resources center, etc.

Supportive Projects

The 2004 curriculum includes student self development, for which schools may take the initiatives to undertake extracurricular programs. In regards to English teaching and

learning, secondary EFL teachers recognize the following as the challenges: (1) students' motivation to learn the language (33%), (2) mismatch of teachers' background (28.8%), (3) teachers' under qualification (20.8%), and (4) non-conducive policy from the government (15.6%). Only 13.4% of the respondents who thought that extracurricular programs could be used as mean to do innovation in EFL teaching. They believed that innovation in EFL teaching was best carried out through PAIKEM, or active, innovative, creative, effective, and fun learning (42.7%) and use of instructional technology (29.4%). This suggests the following.

- a. Students' motivation to learn English plays a vital role in their education. Teachers then should have competences to boost students' motivation
- b. Some EFL teachers do not have the relevant educational background or are under-qualified, and therefore in-service training is a must. In elementary and secondary schools under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the situation is even worse
- c. The use of instructional technology is essential to help teachers to create conducive environment for learning.

Exchange Programs and English Camps

A few public schools and private schools in big cities have established exchange programs with their sister schools overseas. Selected schools such as RSBI--pilot school of international standard--are encouraged by the regional office of education to establish such programs. Innovative programs such as English camps are not popular in the country. Wealthy parents prefer to send their children to private English courses, and some to overseas, especially Singapore and Australia.

Scholarships and fund

Some ministries provide scholarships and fund for teachers in schools under their management. Many teachers are attending a graduate program for a degree under the

scholarships from the central government, not from the regional offices. The ministries of Religious Affairs, of Agriculture, of Minerals and Energy, for example, manage their own schools. While the curriculum is basically the same, the school management is within the authority of the ministries.

Foreign Language Institutions (Public & Private organizations)

The biggest EFL association in Indonesia is TEFLIN (Teachers of English as a Foreign Language in Indonesia). Established on 25 September 1970 in Jogyakarta, Indonesia, it was meant to be a professional organization to accommodate EFL teachers in the country, that are almost 150,000 EFL teachers in Indonesia. TEFLIN holds an annual international seminar hosted mostly by a university in coordination with the national TEFLIN board. At the regional or provincial level, TEFLIN coordinators are in charge of coordinating seminars and workshops related to teaching English. However, in general their perceptions toward TEFLIN are not positive. They believe that TEFLIN is a professional forum for those who teach English at tertiary institutions, and prefer to form an alternative association (Sundayana, 2012, personal communication).

Problems

International-standard pilot-project schools (RSBI)

By law, every province and every district, close to 500 districts altogether, throughout Indonesia is required to establish at least one school in each level with international standards, a requirement of which is the use of English as a medium of instruction. Being taught in many primary schools, and compulsory in junior and secondary schools with over 60 thousand schools and with over 18 million student's altogether, there is on the average only two teachers of English in one school, therefore one English teacher has to

handle on the average of 150 students (Hamied, 2010). The establishment of RSBI not only widens the gap between the affluent and the poor, but opens new corruption opportunities. The National Education Ministry plans to conduct an evaluation of international-standard pilot-project schools (RSBI)--currently 1,305 RSBI schools comprising 239 primary schools, 356 junior high schools, 359 high schools and 351 vocational high schools--not only based on academic indicators such as student performance but also non-academic indicators such as the students' morals. The call comes after students of an high school in Jakarta attacked a group of journalists after brawling with students from a neighboring school (*The Jakarta Post*, 09/23/2011).

GBA (Genre-Based Approach)

This approach is being promoted and socialized throughout Indonesia. GBA was perceived by secondary EFL teacher respondents as follows: (1) teachers' understanding of GBA is not sufficient (47.2%), (2) communicative approach is more appropriate to foreign language teaching (39.1%), and (3) GBA is not appropriate for foreign language (7.2%). This statistics suggest the following.

- Almost half of the surveyed teachers believe that their understanding of GBA is not sufficient to implement GBA, and still hold that communicative approach is more appropriate for EFL teaching in Indonesia.
- An alternative approach is necessary to help teachers apply the curriculum, for example, by compromising theories and practices originated from GBA and communicative approach.
- GBA has been successful in the Australian context, where English is the first language. To apply it in the Indonesian context, we have to make modifications based on continuous research.

Innovative approaches to Foreign Language Education

The government has taken several initiatives to improve the quality of EFL education, among others through the following:

PAIKEM

PAIKEM is acronym of A (active), I (innovative), K (communicative), E (efficient), and M (*menyenangkan* or fun), an approach to teaching all school subjects including English. As an acronym PAIKEM is easy to recall and say, and has been popular among school teachers. The majority of elementary teachers (62.2%) and secondary teachers (42.7%) believe that innovation in EFL learning is best carried out by PAIKEM. However, the five principles of PAIKEM are put the following order from most difficult: (1) creative (36.2%), (2) innovative (23.6%), (3) effective (17.9%), (4) active (12.2%), and fun (10.2%). This suggests the following.

- Being active, innovative, communicative, efficient, and or fun is valued by students learning any subject. To achieve this teaching should observe the following characteristics: student-centered, joyful learning; competency-based learning; mastery learning; continuous learning; and contextual learning (Syah and Kariadinata, 2009).
- PAIKEM is a humanistic approach to teaching and has been more popular among elementary teachers, who work with young students. On higher levels such as junior and senior secondary levels the approach is less popular. Teachers may use other approaches to teaching without necessarily ignoring the PAIKEM characteristics.
- Compared with innovativeness, effectiveness, activity, and fun, creativity is the most difficult to apply to teaching EFL.

Use of instructional technology

Next to PAIKEM is the use of instructional technology, which was believed by elementary teachers (24.3%) and secondary teachers (29.4%) as ways of innovative language teaching. This suggests the following.

- For both elementary teachers and secondary EFL teachers instructional technology is important for innovative teaching. However, PAIKEM approach is more important, that is active, innovative, communicative, efficient, and or fun learning.
- Innovation in teaching does not necessarily mean modern technology. The most essential of innovation is a reasoned change in teachers' mindset.

Use of native speakers

Next to instructional technology is native speakers as a means of innovative language teaching. Some elementary teachers (7.2%) and secondary teachers (12.8%) believe that native speakers could help them develop innovative language teaching. As evident from the percentage of responses, native speakers will not significantly improve EFL teaching and learning.

Use of extracurricular programs

In addition to all mentioned above only 6.3% of elementary teachers and only (13.4%) of secondary teachers who believed that extracurricular programs can be used for developing innovative language teaching. This suggests that innovation is taking place in the classroom originating from teachers' creativity.

However, innovation in EFL teaching as perceived by elementary teachers is constrained by the following factors: (1) difficulty in obtaining instructional technology (30.8%), (2) school culture (25.2%), (3) big size of the class (21.5%), and (3) student's low motivation (20.6%). Likewise, constraints of innovation as perceived by secondary teachers

include: (1) things related to instructional technology (30.7%), (2) big size of classes (26.1%), (3) school culture (19.5%), and (4) student's low motivation (8.5%). This suggests the following.

- a. The similar constraints of innovation are faced by both groups of teachers. Provision of instructional technology to schools all over the country will be prohibitively expensive. Therefore, priority should be given to the most inexpensive thing but promises a great impact.
- b. Some schools may have developed their own culture that is not necessarily supportive to the innovation. EFL teachers cannot work alone without involving the school management as a system.

Educational Standards and Quality Assurance

National Standard

BSNP or the Board of National Education Standard oversees the standards of education all over the country. The eight national standard of education (content, competencies, process, assessment, teachers and educational personnel, infrastructure, budgeting, and management) are already set up, and all schools use it for benchmarking. The standards are perceived differently by both groups of teachers. On the national standard of education secondary teachers believe that the standards are: (1) not met yet (64.2%), (2) are appropriate (17.4%), (3) are too high to achieve (15.0%), and (4) are already achieved (3.2%). This suggests the following.

- a. The present standard of teaching and learning is not achieved yet due to the magnitude of the aforementioned problems. Some schools with high quality standard may have met or even exceeded the national standard. The national standard of education in eight aspects of education needs to be maintained for the national benchmark.
- b. Some standards are relatively too high for certain schools especially in remote

areas outside Java. Therefore, a review of the standards and its implementation is necessary for estimating the cost of educational programs. Based on her observation of teacher education institutions in Java, Bali and Lampung, Luciana (2003) has found that not only were the discrepancies wide in terms of the teachers' English knowledge base, but also the teaching skills were not adequately imparted and developed.

- c. Efforts should be made to empower the provincial governments to implement the standards in coordination with the regional office of quality assurance.

Quality Assurance

LPMP is a newly established body that oversees quality of education at provincial levels. Currently there are 13 LPMPs all over the country. Secondary teachers believe that: (1) quality assurance should be done internally at school (33.3%), (2) LPMP is not able to do the job (28 %), (3) teacher association could be involved in the program (21.4%), and (4) teachers are not aware of LPMP (16.0%). This suggests the following.

- a. Quality assurance should be perceived as an internal commitment of the school to improving education. In line with the current policy on school-based management, the school should develop its own quality assurance unit.
- b. Almost all teachers are aware of the establishment of quality assurance offices but they believe that they are not staffed with professionals and experts to do the job.
- c. Professional associations of EFL teachers such as TEFLIN could play an important role in controlling the quality of EFL education in the country.

3. Major issues and challenges

Stakeholders would generally have different perceptions on what constitutes burning issues and challenges in EFL

education in Indonesia. Elementary teachers, for example, identify the following as the major issues and challenges:

- a. Inconsistency of regulations have created confusion among teachers (33.6%)
- b. It is difficult to enforce the same standard of education to all districts and cities in Indonesia (32.1%)
- c. Conversation should prioritized at elementary school (26.1%)
- d. Good mastery of Indonesian will help mastery of foreign language (7.5%)

Meanwhile secondary EFL teachers identified the following as the major issues and challenges:

- a. Inconsistency in policies have created confusion among teachers (25.7%)
- b. It is difficult to enforce the same standards to all schools across the regencies and cities (30.1%)
- c. Less appreciation from the government to achievement in the humanities (15.5%)
- d. Students' mastery of Indonesian to improve their mastery of foreign language (8.7%)
- e. Foreign language at school be focused on reading (7.1%)

Most teachers do not like literature (6.8%).

From the statistics above the following observations can be set forth.

- a. Both groups of EFL teachers recognize five major issues and challenges in EFL education in Indonesia, namely (1) inconsistency in regulations, which have created confusion among teachers, (2) difficulty in enforcing the same standard of education to all districts and cities in Indonesia, (3) conversation should be prioritized at elementary school, and (4) less appreciation from the government to the teaching of the humanities.
- b. Both groups of teachers seem to take it easy the function of Indonesian as the first language. The mastery of the first language will affect the mastery of the second or foreign language (Watson 2012, in press). As he puts it, and I fully agree

that "... The prerequisite for learning a foreign language well is first to have an excellent command of your language."

- c. It is irony that—despite the poor quality of English teaching—English seems to be easier than Indonesian. More than 50% of senior high school students had to repeat their Indonesian language tests as they had failed in the 2010 national examination (Hamied, 2012). There is indication that people in the sample big cities tend to be proud of English than Indonesian (Sugiono & Sasangka: 2011)

Conclusions

Indonesia has experienced the abrupt change of the mandated curriculum, the competency-based curriculum (KBK) enacted in 2004, to the KTSP or school-based curriculum, implemented in the 2009/2010 academic year. Earlier in the late 1990s, we used the 1994 curriculum, which was then replaced by the 2004 curriculum, which did not differ that much. In practice, these two last curriculums (KBK and KTSP) are not significantly different to each other. For teachers and students directly involved, it has not really made much difference and has not produced a marked improvement in the nation's education. The last two curriculums asked students to be the center of the learning process, but the fact is that in classrooms, teachers are still at the center. The curriculums are good but they are hard to apply in Indonesia for a variety of reasons. Here are the major ones.

First, basic to curriculum development is research; try out, socialization, and decision. The current curriculum as well as the previous ones was developed without carefully following those steps, therefore many problems persist. School-based curriculum (KTSP) empowers junior high schools and teachers to implement it by accommodating and utilizing their local potentials. However, due to limited expertise and experiences, they are not ready to do it. They still rely on the

guidelines from the central government.

Second, the current policies have produced inconsistencies and these have created confusion among teachers. The spirit of school-based curriculum is school autonomy to manage the school including school exams. However, in the current system all students have to take the national exams, which are developed by the central government. In terms of class size, the standard is 30 students per class. However to materialize the compulsory education policy, oftentimes the school has to admit more students (up to 48-50 students per class) than it can take.

Third, in general teachers' English proficiency is not sufficient to be a professional English teacher, despite their claimed mastery of the subject (teaching materials). At the primary level, the situation is even worse. Unqualified teachers are recruited by primary schools especially in rural areas. Thus the school has developed the wrong foundation for learning English at the upper levels. No commitment is shown by the regional government to financing professional development programs. English teaching at primary schools is a school policy, not a government policy, so the regional government has no responsibility for undertaking such programs. Ostensibly, secondary school teachers recommended that professional development programs be carried out by the central government, as the regional governments are not ready to share the responsibility.

Fourth, teacher recruitment is neither selective nor competitive, especially at elementary levels. Unfortunately the government is not directly concerned, because English teaching is a school policy. In general teachers are aware that instructional technology, which was the weakest factor in their professionalism, is important for promoting quality learning. However, instructional technology is not everything. The most important aspect of language learning is teachers' mastery of English and its

pedagogy. A humanistic approach to learning, such as creative, innovative, effective, active, and fun learning, is instrumental in promoting quality learning. And all of these are very much appreciated by elementary students. To achieve this, teaching should observe the following characteristics: student-centered, joyful learning; competency-based learning; mastery learning; continuous learning; and contextual learning. Only well-prepared pre-service training will produce such quality teachers.

Fifth, due to disparity in terms of quality and quantity of teachers, school and infrastructure throughout the country, the present problems will persist. Good teachers, good schools, and modern infrastructure exist in the urban areas. In the meantime, the majority (around 60%) of the population live in the rural areas. The policy on regional autonomy in education essentially fits in the country. However, the policy does not work as the regional governments do not have quality human resources to exercise it.

Sixth, our first language education has not built a strong foundation for developing proficiency and literacy in the foreign language. The introduction of EFL to primary school students to a certain extent has created a phenomenon of uprooting the indigenous culture. Besides, given the present problems, it fails to pave a smooth way for teaching English at the secondary levels. Ideally the local content in the elementary curriculum should be used for exposing the local culture to the students. Elementary students as well as their parents are proud of learning English instead of, say, Sundanese language, a local language spoken by more than 30 million in West Java. Currently the government is calling for revitalizing character education. Character is first developed thorough the ethnic language and catered by first culture. EFL teachers have an opportunity to positively influence our students on the potentials and local wisdom embedded in the ethnic languages. EFL teachers should integrate local wisdom into

language teaching especially at elementary and secondary levels.

Seventh, professional development of EFL teachers should be put in the comprehensive framework of language planning. As a multicultural and multilingual country, Indonesia is facing a magnitude of problems, EFL education is just one them. As a matter of fact, we are still dragging our feet in improving our first language education, which is much more urgent to fix. Character building and critical thinking are first and foremost developed through the first language. EFL teachers should be reminded that success in EFL learning to a great extent depends on the success in the first language learning. In terms of professional development, the current system has not empowered the regional government to take the initiatives. Besides they do not have human resources to exercise the autonomy implied the current curriculum.

List of Acronyms

BSE	<i>Buku Sekolah Elektronik</i> (E-School Textbook)
BSNP	<i>Badan Standarisasi Nasional Pendidikan</i> (Board of National Standard of Education)
GBA	Genre-based Approach
KBK	<i>Kurikulum Berbasis Kompetensi</i> (Competence-Based Curriculum)
KTSP	<i>Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan</i> (School-Based Curriculum)
LPMP	<i>Lembaga Penjaminan Mutu Pendidikan</i> (Board for Quality Assurance of Education)
LPTK	<i>Lembaga Pendidikan Tenaga Kependidikan</i> (Teacher Training College/University)
MGMP	<i>Musyawaharah Guru Mata Pelajaran</i> (Deliberation of School Subject Teachers)
PAIKEM	<i>Pembelajaran Aktif, Inovatif, Kreatif, Efektif dan Menyenangkan</i> (Active, Innovative, Creative, Effective, and Fun)

PGSD	<i>Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar</i> (Elementary Teacher Education)
P4TK	<i>Pusat Pelatihan Pengembangan Profesi Tenaga Kependidikan</i> (Center for Educational Personnel Training and Development)
PLPG	<i>Pendidikan Latihan Profesi Guru</i> (Teacher Professional Development Program)
RSBI	<i>Rintisan Sekolah Bertaraf Internasional</i> (Project School of International Standard)
TEFLIN	Teachers of English as a Foreign Language in Indonesia

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